

Samoa

A Paradise of the South Seas

By Frank Fox

Author of "Oceania," etc.

THE Samoan Islands—"the Navigators' Islands" as they were first christened by Louis Antoine de Bougainville in 1768—are typical of that charming South Seas life which is now quickly passing away.

Where the Pacific Ocean rolls its long swell the world was, until very recent years, still young and fresh. There were there laughing nations of happy children who had never grown up, and lands where the curse of Adam, which is that with the sweat of the brow must bread be won, had not fallen.

Civilization, alas! intrudes now, more urgent each year to bring its drabness of fettered life; and the Paradises of the South Seas yield to its advance—here with the sullen and passionate resentment of the angry child, there with the pathetic listlessness of the child too afraid to be angry.

Still, there survives much—and especially in Samoa—that has the atmosphere rather of the Garden of Eden than of this curious world which man has made for himself—a world of exacting tasks and harsh taskmasters, of ugly houses and smoke-stained skies, of machinery and conventions.

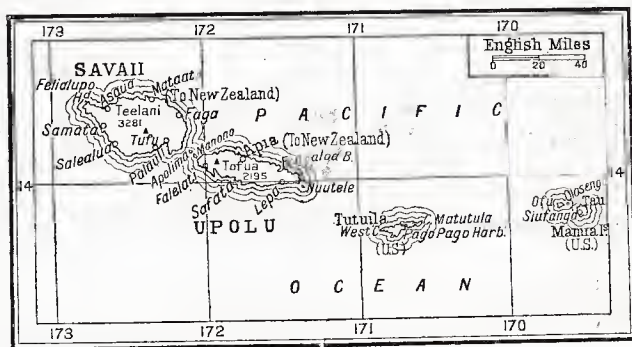
There was enough to hold Robert Louis Stevenson bondsman to Samoa during the closing years of his life. The impression with him, as he records, was instant: "The anchor plunged. It was a small sound, a great event; my soul went down with these moorings whence no windlass may extract nor any diver fish it up, and I, and some of my ship's company,

were from that hour the bondslaves of the isles of Vivien."

The Samoan group, a little south of the Equator, is near to the longitude point where one gains or loses a day travelling west or east. The 171st meridian divides it under two flags: east of that meridian the Stars and Stripes fly; west, the British flag, with the Dominion of New Zealand as guardian. The group has thus two capitals, Pago Pago—an important naval station—for the American half, and Apia for the British half.

This division is the final development of a very troubled history. The Dutch were the first white people to visit Samoa (1722). The French followed in 1768. But neither effected a settlement. The London Missionary Society (1830) were the pioneer white colonists, and they were followed a decade later by a United States naval mission which was the first to explore and survey the group.

In the middle of the nineteenth century a kind of loose tripartite guardianship of the islands was established by Great Britain, the U.S.A., and Germany, but there was no defined diplomatic control. An American naval officer secured the right to establish a



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naval station at Pago Pago in 1872, and made a "treaty" with the Samoan people which his government did not take up.

For a long period of years subsequently the Samoans were the sport of the rivalry of the three white Powers. An American citizen set himself up as dictator of the islands in 1873, and was deported by the British in 1876. The next year the Germans made war on Samoa, deposing one king and setting up another, and naval squadrons from the three Powers assembled at Apia prepared for trouble. Nature—one may imagine without being too fanciful—was

angered at all this squabbling in her little Eden, and the great hurricane of 1889—hurricanes are very rare in the group—completely destroyed the American and the German squadrons. Only the British ship *Calliope* survived by putting out to sea. It was an early proof that the new age of steam and steel had not destroyed the spirit of the British Navy.

The *Calliope* was able, because of the superior care that had been taken of her engines and the courage and daring of her men, to steam out of Apia harbour in the teeth of the wild hurricane. An incident of the tragedy which will be



AGED FINGERS NIMBLE STILL IN BRAIDING TWINE

There is virtually no limit to the practical utility of every portion of the coconut palm, and the Samoans, intelligent and clever craftsmen, make full use of this most valuable of their natural assets. These old fellows, natives of Tutuila, are braiding together shreds of fibre from the husks of coconuts, and twisting the braids into "afe," a twine which while very light is surprisingly strong

Photo, Underwood Press Service



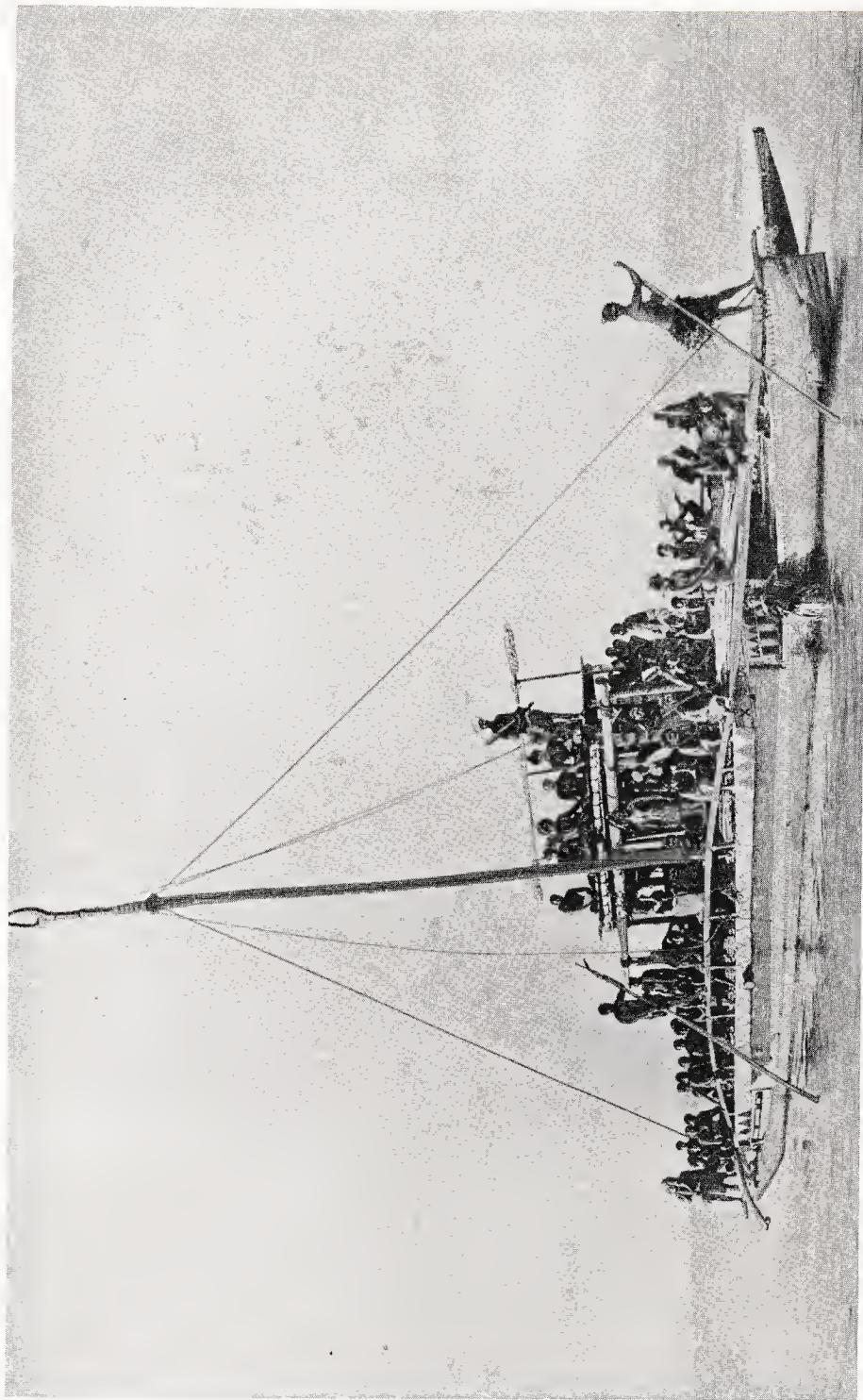
CAPABLE WOMANHOOD BUSY ON SAMOA'S MAIN HOME INDUSTRY

Mats are the prime necessity for Samoans setting up housekeeping, and every native woman is expert in the art of weaving them from the leaves and fibres profusely ready to her hand. Mats piled one on another serve as beds; upon mats the people sit cross-legged for meals; and mats that can be hung up and removed at will serve as walls for the native houses

Photo, Brown Brothers

always remembered in naval history, and in the records of the Anglo-Saxon race, is that the crews of the doomed American warships "manned the yards" to cheer the British ship as she went out to fight the storm in the open sea. The tragedy of 1889 did seem really

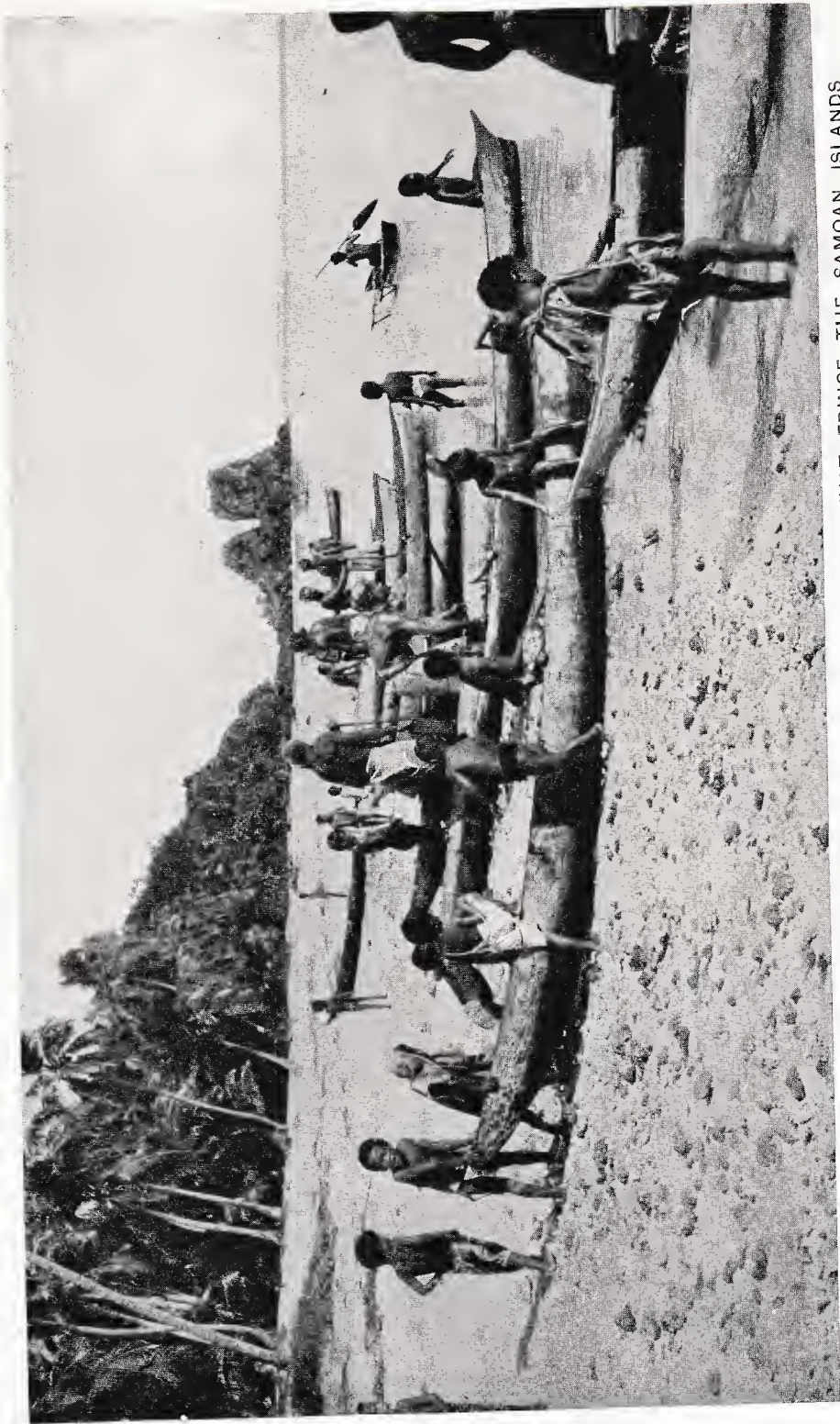
to convey its lesson, and by the Berlin Act Samoa was granted independence, with, however, a Chief Justice representing the three Powers. That system did not endure, and shortly afterwards the Samoan Islands were divided between the United States and Germany, Great



SHIP-BUILDING AND SEAMANSHIP THAT WON FOR THE SAMOANS THE PROUD NAME OF NAVIGATORS

From time immemorial the Samoans have been famous as watermen, so much so, indeed, that their islands were formerly called the Navigators' Islands. Their boats were of the canoe type in use among all the peoples of the South Seas, trunks of trees hollowed out with fire and adze and sometimes fitted with outriggers. They not infrequently attained dimensions entitling them to be described as ships, with decks and deckhouses, and accommodation for a large crew during voyages hundreds of miles in length that must have occupied considerable periods of time

Photo, Brown Brothers



AMPHIBIOUS YOUNG KANAKAS AT PLAY AMONG THE BLUE LAGOONS THAT FRINGE THE SAMOAN ISLANDS
Their native watermanship is shown by the Samoans in earliest infancy, the brown babies making for the sea as soon as they can roll. Quite tiny children manage their little craft with such dexterity that Kanaka and canoe seem to be a single living thing. All along the coasts the children may be seen playing in their pow-pows, or outrigger canoes, in the lagoons behind the surf breaking on the reefs—a fascinating living picture of bronze humanity on white beaches fringed on the one hand by verdant palms and on the other by turquoise sea

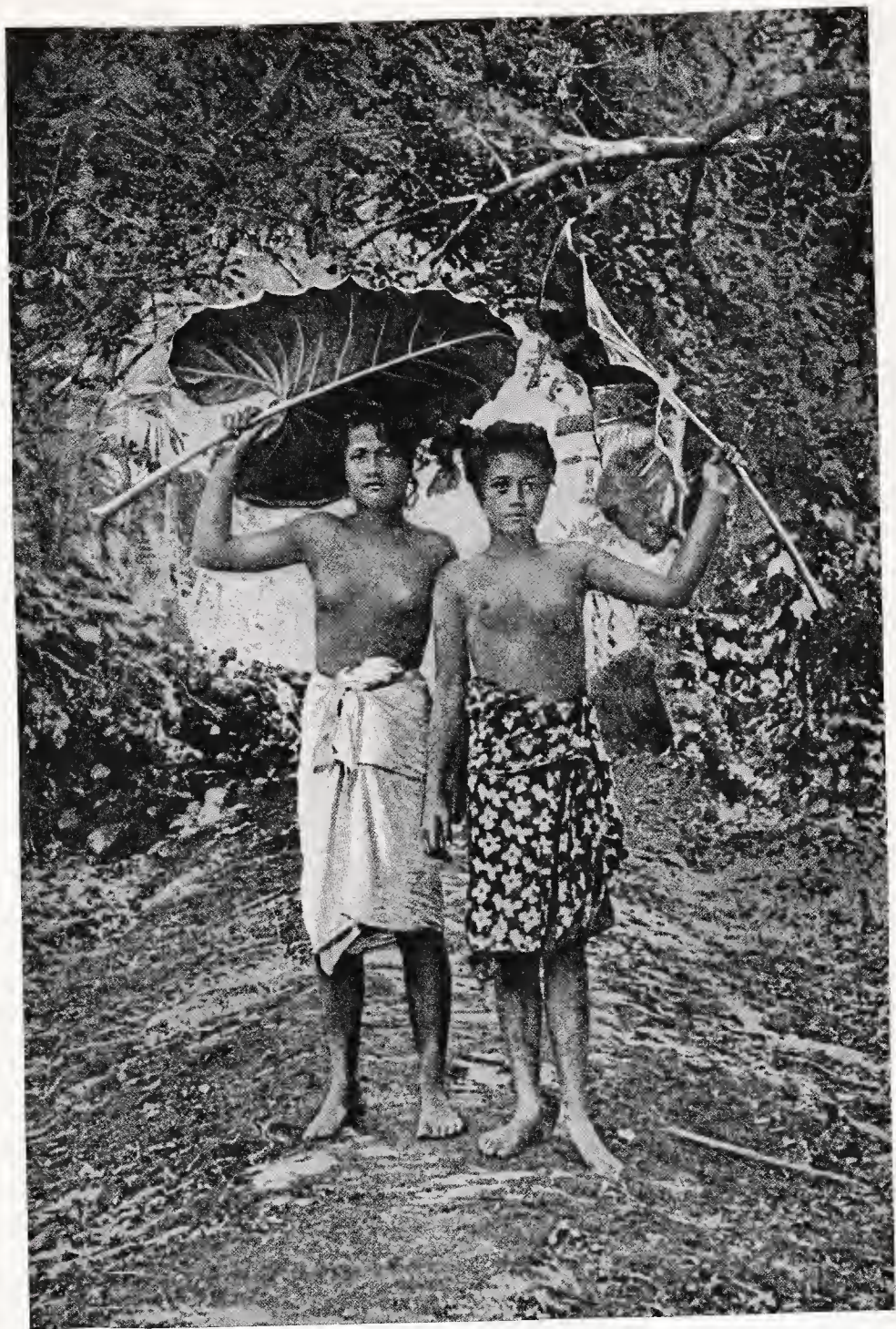
Photo. Underwood Press Service



FAIR DAUGHTERS OF A HANDSOME RACE

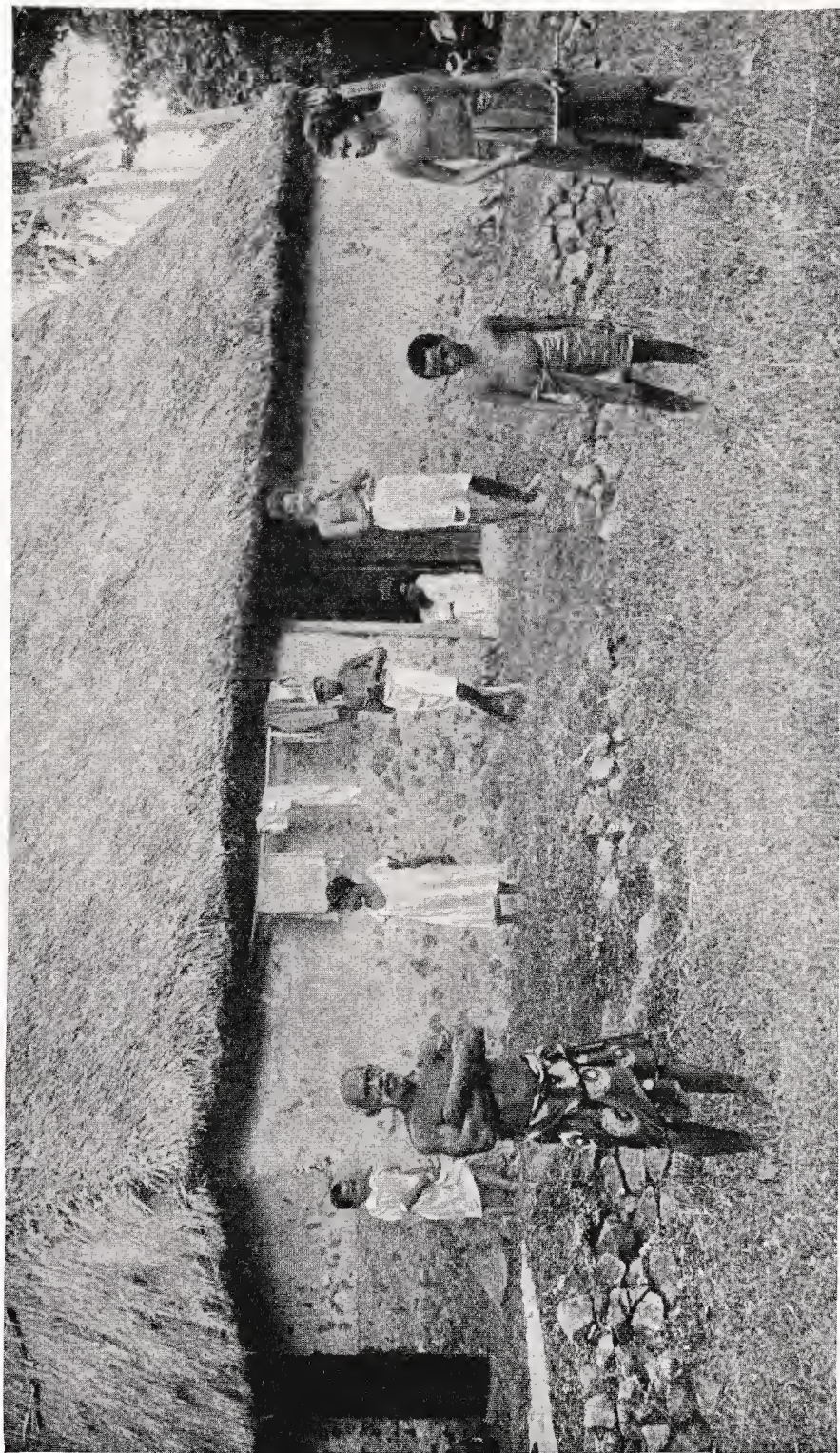
Samoans are the handsomest race in the Pacific, and the young women are often really beautiful, with well-proportioned figures and a most alluring charm. Their love of colour is highly developed, and they show a native artistry in the selection for their personal adornment of the flowers and hues that will most enhance the warmth and colour of their skin and hair

Photo, A. J. Tattersall



MAIDS OF HONOUR OF A SAMOAN VILLAGE "TAUPO"

In not a few communities of still low culture the village virgin is a sacrosanct personality. Known in Samoa as the "taupo," she leads the official dances, and looks after the comfort and entertainment of distinguished visitors. She lives in a house of her own, and is attended by several handmaidens chosen for their beauty of face and figure and for their ability and grace as dancers



CARE-FREE, INDOLENT NATIVE LIFE IN THE GENIAL CLIMATE OF THE BEAUTIFUL ISLANDS OF SAMOA

Living in their villages and working their plantations with a minimum of care and labour, the friendly, half-civilized natives of Samoa lead a quiet, inactive existence. Food is abundant, vegetables and fruit form the chief diet, varied by pork and fish, but even the poorest family is not dependent on labour for the wherewithal to live, and can easily subsist on the food which nature supplies freely for the gathering. Home industries are few and undeveloped, for there is little incentive to labour, and the construction of houses and manufacture of cloth and mats provide almost the whole field for the employment of native ingenuity.



SYMPHONY OF ARMS IN A PERFORMANCE OF THE SIVA DANCE

Three young girls are performing an intricate figure of the Siva, said to be one of the most attractive of Polynesian dances. Seated cross-legged on a square of matting, they make all their movements with the arms and upper part of the body; now and then they will sing some pleasant-sounding old melody, for song with the Samoans usually goes hand-in-hand with the dance



AMONG THE MERRY AND PLEASURE-LOVING NATIVES OF SAMOA

The Samoans have an inveterate passion for dancing, and no occasion is too insignificant on which to indulge in this popular pastime. The cottons of civilization are discarded for the festive moment, and flowers and foliage form the regulation ballet costume which, though scanty, is admirably suited for the display of lissom grace given by these lithe-limbed daughters of the Southern Pacific



FORMIDABLE WEAPON OF SAMOAN WARRIOR

Flowers, leaves, and matting are all his costume, but though simple in tastes and chivalrous in manner, this Samoan is not without a leaning towards bellicosity, and can remember the time when he regarded the head of an enemy as his choice trophy

Photo, Underwood Press Service

Britain getting compensation in another quarter. On August 30, 1914, a New Zealand force captured German Samoa, the first capture of a German colony in the Great War. The group is now partly American and partly under New Zealand as mandatory for the British Empire under the League of Nations.

Samoa may boast, I think, the handsomest race in the Pacific. A fine-looking fellow is the Samoan dandy, taller than most of the aboriginal people of Polynesian stock, his hair frizzed out and bleached to a Titian red with lime, which he gets by burning the coral of the reefs. Truly beautiful, too, are the

Samoa women when they are young—fine in figure and light bronze in hue. They are not without a consciousness of their grace, which they assist with wreaths of the dark scarlet hibiscus-flower and the lighter scarlet of the pomegranate-flower.

The dress for the men is the lava lava, a loin-cloth. The women used to wear a very short kirtle made of bark cloth, leaving the rest of the body bare except when the torso was wreathed with flowers for a gala occasion. Lately European influence has led to the women wearing more clothing when in towns and villages where there are white residents.

The Samoans are very courteous and dignified. Their ancient manner of life was a kind of aristocratic communism. Property was little reputed because nature supplied all that man wanted practically without labour on his part. Rank was, however, most

highly esteemed and the chiefs enjoyed great respect. The language reflected the national character in its wealth of honorific terms and its curious provision of a dignified word and a common word for the same object. Politeness demanded that in referring, say, to your neighbour's house you used the dignified word and in referring to your own house the commonplace word.

A Samoan banquet is as elaborate in its ritual and as elegant in its courtesies as a dinner at All Souls College, Oxford. The chief who entertains you is at once your servant and your friend. He is most punctilious in the observance of

SAMOAN ISLANDERS

In Their Halcyon Home



Shapely in figure and light bronze in hue, Samoan young womanhood has both charm and beauty when apparelled in its own bright native garb

Photo, Brown Brothers



They are making kava, the favourite beverage of the Samoans. From the roots of the kava shrub, ground, soaked in water, pounded and rubbed, a milky liquid is extracted which provides a refreshing stimulant

Photo, Brown Brothers



On her lava lava the Samoan woman expends much artistry. It is made of mulberry bark, painted with brilliant juices of tropical plants



Breadfruit furnishes delicious flour. This Tutuitan matron is spreading out the pulp to dry in the sun in preparation for an early baking

Photos, Underwood Press Service



Sprung from brave fighting stock this native warrior of Pago Pago is a formidable foe with his bow and arrows and many-barbed spears

Photo, Brown and Dawson



Towering helms nodding with plumes and blossoms are vanity's crowning achievement when womanhood appears in festal array in Pago Pago

Photo, Brown and Dawson



Conspicuous even above her garish lava lava is the brilliant smile with which the Samoan beauty faces life in her fortunate islands

Photo, Underwood Press Service



Although royalty exists no more in Samoa, birth and breeding still are manifest, as in the gracious figure of this girl of princely origin



A vanishing art in far more civilized lands, oratory is cultivated in Samoa, where this tulafale, or professional orator, is an honoured figure

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etiquette on his side, but if you offend unwittingly no notice is taken.

An elaborate etiquette surrounds every social observance, and when tribal wars broke out they were carried on with a ceremonious politeness which prevented them from becoming very murderous. The person of any herald or messenger was sacred, and the discussion of the exactly proper ritual for beginning a fight would often lead to all anger evaporating and a feast being held instead.

It is bad form for a Samoan to brag of his own exploits, but he will magnify his friends' deeds in finely poetic language.

Macdonald's judgement, in his "Oceania," was truthful as well as kindly: "They are most polite in their intercourse with each other. They are hospitable and generous. They live according to strict laws and customs handed down to them from their fore-

fathers. In their way, or according to their lights, they are pious and religious. They live in the presence of the supernatural. They are a sensible people. They treat their children kindly, and are shocked to see Europeans correcting their children: I have never seen a native beating a child."

Religion is as favoured a hobby among the Samoans as cricket among the Fijians. Before the coming of the white man the Samoan natives followed devoutly religious customs which had neither grossness nor cruelty. When the Europeans came Christianity was accepted eagerly. Prayers are said night and morning in most Samoan houses. In and around Apia there are innumerable churches, missions, and religious schools.

The Roman Catholic Cathedral at Apia is a truly fine building. The London Missionary Society has the greatest



GIRL MEMBERS OF A GENTLE-MANNERED ISLAND COMMUNITY

As with most Pacific islanders, the natives of the Samoan group are much addicted to dancing, singing, and feasting, and in recent years to church-going. An attractive people, they have shown themselves eager to assimilate Christianity, and there is scarcely a village that has not its own pastor and mission school, for the Samoans are alive to all the advantages of education

Photo, Keystone View Co.



AFTER THE COCONUT HARVEST IN SAMOA: SKILLED LABOUR MAKING COPRA

Copra is the important export of the Samoan islands. The coconuts are broken open, and the kernels taken out and cut into strips, which are then dried; these dried strips are the copra of commerce, exported for the sake of its oil, which is extracted by pressure in the mills of Europe. In the East the oil is used for lamps and in unguents; in Europe it enters largely into the manufacture of margarine, soap, candles, medicine, and ointment. The refuse is not infrequently used to assist in the making of the oil-cake given as fattening fodder to cattle

Photo, A. J. Tattersall

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number of adherents—about twenty-eight thousand. There are also Mormon and Seventh Day Adventist sects. On Sundays every place is closed and every Samoan goes to church.

The Samoan has ample supplies of the necessities of life provided for him by nature. The breadfruit, the yam, the taro—the two last resemble potatoes somewhat, the former is a faint imitation of bread—many kinds of fruits, the coconut, which is useful for food and

of industry. He is a sportsman, a gentleman of leisure, not a labourer. He will work with extreme energy for a time at anything which interests him, but he will not settle down to steady toil. He finds it difficult to comprehend why man, who is the "crown of things," should condemn himself to perpetual hard work.

I watched once for an hour or two from the veranda of my island host his garden-boy at work. This was a "good"



COLLECTING NUTS FOR COPRA-MAKING ON A COCONUT PLANTATION

The coconut palm abounds in Samoa, where the nuts are said to be larger than those produced on the more southern islands. Copra is the chief, and virtually the only, export; it is abundant and of excellent value. Horses and wheeled carriages are found on the islands, but the roads are poor, and this up-to-date vehicle and well-kept thoroughfare are due to American enterprise

Photo, A. J. Tattersall

drink and for its fibre—all grow with little or no cultivation. The kava root provides a mild stimulant. The ocean gives a plentiful supply of fish. Since the advent of the white man, pigs and cattle have been introduced and flourish. A house is easy to construct, and the little clothing that the climate exacts is no great trouble to make.

It is in a way unfortunate that nature made life so easy to the Samoan, for as a natural consequence he has no habit

garden-boy, noted in the district for his industry. And he played with his work with an elegant naïveté that was altogether charming to one who had not to be his paymaster. Almost bare of clothing, his fine bronzed muscles rippled and glanced to show that he had the strength for any task if he had but the will.

Perhaps this gentle energy was inspired by the aesthetic idea of just keeping his bronze skin a little moist, so as to bring out to the full its satin



POPULAR SPORT AMONG THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS: SAMOANS ENGAGED IN A BASEBALL MATCH

Games are indulged in with an ever-increasing enthusiasm among the natives of the Samoan Islands. Referring to the pastimes and recreations of his adopted neighbours on Upolu, the central and most important of the Samoan group, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote that "cricket matches, where a hundred played upon a side, endured at times for weeks, and ate up the country like the presence of an army." Baseball, the national game of America, has found much favour with the Samoans, and here a sturdy, dark-skinned batsman is seen standing at the home plate preparatory to taking his stroke



SUNSHINE FALLS ON BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM IN SAMOA AT THE OUTSET OF THEIR MARRIED LIFE

Although theoretically they are a monogamous people, the Samoans wear their marriage bonds very lightly. Polygamy as such is not recognized by the Samoan code, but divorce is so easily arranged that there is hardly any limit to the number of wives a man may have in succession. 'Legal divorce can be secured on the ground of desertion, and actual divorce is often effected by the simple process of "running a wife home." The husband then takes another woman into his house, and offers a sop to the outraged majesty of the law by paying a fine



ELIGIBLE RESIDENCE FOR A WELL-TO-DO FAMILY IN SAMOA

Samoa native houses are of the beehive type of architecture, oval, or more commonly circular in form, and comprising but a single room some fifty feet in diameter. The walls are of thatch with, sometimes, removable matting panels serving as windows. The roof is of thick thatch of sugar-cane leaves, bound together with strips of coconut palm and suspended over a ridge pole



CLOTH-MAKING WITHOUT LOOMS IN THE SAMOAN ISLANDS

Until the quite recent importation of cheap cotton goods, tapa cloth was the only fabric made by the Samoans for their garments. It is made from the bark of the paper mulberry, an indigenous tree throughout Polynesia, Burma, and China, and used in Japan for paper making. The bark is beaten to paper thinness and dyed with vegetable juices, the material being flexible and durable



SAMOAN HOUSE IN CONSTRUCTION, SHOWING FRAMEWORK OF ROOF

The Samoan house is little more than a roof supported by poles, the ribs being carefully tied together with coconut fibre rope and then thatched with sugar-cane or pandanus leaves. Curtains of plaited palm leaves are sometimes added, but these serve to shelter the inmates against the weather rather than to screen them from publicity; for the "open house" has a real significance in Samoa

Photo, Underwood Press Service

grace without blurring the fine anatomical lines with drops of visible sweat. His languid grace deserved that it should have had some such prompting.

If a bird alighted in a tree, he quickly dropped his hoe and pursued it with stones, which—his bright smile said—were not maliciously meant, but merely had a stimulatory purpose. An insect, a passing wayfarer, the fall of a leaf, a cloud in the sky, all provided equally good reasons for stopping work. Finally, at three o'clock a little shower came, and the "model boy" thankfully ceased work for the day.

Because the Samoan cannot be taught to work steadily, Chinese coolies have been introduced to meet the needs of the new industries that came with the white man. It is the official view that no harm results from this, but those who love the Samoan race regret an immigration which must result in bringing a Chinese strain into their blood.

The white men going to Samoa have not always been guiltless of contaminating the native life. Very many of the early white settlers were fugitives from justice, and became "beach-combers" in the Samoan group and other South Sea islands, with more profit to themselves than to the natives.

On the other hand, the Samoan natives have had the benefit of much noble missionary effort, and have benefited, too, from such guests as Robert Louis Stevenson, who lived from 1890 to 1894 at Vailima, near Apia. He was beloved by the Samoans and has made their charm known to all the world. "The coral waxes, the palm grows, but man departs," says a proverb of these islands. It may be the fate of the Samoans to dwindle away before the white man and the Chinese coolie. At least their friends have made it sure that a gracious memory of these delightful people will survive.



CLIMBING THE STEEP SLOPE FROM BORGO MAGGIORE TO SAN MARINO : THE ASCENT FROM SUBURB TO CITADEL
From Rimini, which is the port of call for San Marino, the road runs through a border of white-fronted houses fringing the northern escarpment of Mount Titano, which rises more than a thousand feet above their tiled roofs. A rough track, ill paved with worn stones, slopes up the mount, whose bushy flanks are here and there gashed by rocks. All the way from the coast the traveller has been climbing, and, the last height gained, he can see, as from a tower, the fair fields of Italy